Kennedy Investigators Death Curse Haunts

WILLIAM C. SULLIVAN — retired FBI official who died in a shooting accident.

A curse of sudden death hangs over the men who had any part in investigating the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Now William C. Sullivan, formerly one of the top men in the FBI, has died in what authorities accept as an unfortunate accident while he was out hunting.

Sullivan is the sixth FBI man involved in the investigation to die in a brief six-month period. The epidemic of deaths among the FBI, laid to natural and other causes, coincides remarkably with efforts by the House Assassinations Committee to focus its investigation on FBI involvement in the JFK murder.

Sullivan, 65, was shot to death last Nov. 9 while deer hunting in northern New Hampshire. He had retired from the FBI as a result of a feud with J. Edgar Hoover.

By J. DAVID TRUBY
Contributing Editor

The official report says another hunter, 22-year-old Robert Daniels, shot Sullivan in the neck with a .30/06 rifle equipped with a telescopic sight, mistaking him, from a distance of 243 feet, for a deer although Sullivan was standing in a field.

Daniels pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor charge and was released in the custody of his father to await sentencing.

Sullivan had been the Number 3 man in the FBI. He was "what the FBI stood for," other agents said.

Sullivan was in charge of the FBI's counterintelligence operations, as head of Division V. That placed him in command of the original FBI investigation of JFK's death for the Warren Commission.

'They could have cleared up many mysteries...'

Only 12 days after the assassination, Sullivan authored a secret FBI memo asserting there was no evidence to link Lee Harvey Oswald to foreign interests or to pro-Castro groups.

The full extent of Sullivan's role in the FBI study of JFK's death is a topic of prime interest to the House Committee, an inside source disclosed.

Under Sullivan, Division V was in charge of all work involving counterintelligence including the fight against sabotage, espionage and subversion.

Sullivan's attorney, Joseph Casey of Washington, disclosed that shortly before Sullivan's death he had been summoned to testify before the House Assassinations Committee. Two days after Sullivan was killed, a man identifying himself as an investigator for the Committee showed up at Sullivan's home to pick up his files and papers.

The other FBI officials, all connected with the investigation of Kennedy's death, who died in the latter half of 1977 included:

Alan H. Belmont, 70, last August, after what was

Mid night Globe 2/14/78

called a long illness. He had been a special assistant to former FBI head J. Edgar Hoover, and was an important witness for the Warren Commission.

James Cadigan, 60, also last August. Cadigan had been in excellent health. News reports said he died "of injuries suffered after a fall in his home." Cadigan was an expert on documents, and testified to the Warren Commission about classified documents involved in the Kennedy case.

J.M. English, 60, late last October of an unexpected heart attack. He had retired as a field agent in 1966 after work on the JFK case, and then became head of the FBI's Forensic Science Lab, where the weapons in the JFK case were tested and the results tabulated.

Cover-up

Donald Kaylor, 63, last October — another unexpected heart attack victim. A chemist in the FBI fingerprint section, Kaylor had done tests on the Oswald rifle, the 6.5mm Mannlicher-Carcano; also on Oswald's revolver and that of Jack Ruby.

Louis Nichols, 71, last June — "an unexpected heart attack." He was a high-rank special assistant to J. Edgar Hoover, and Hoover's liaison with the Kennedy investigation team.

A former member of the House Committee confided, "Sullivan — and possibly the others — had a great deal of inside information; they could have cleared up many mysteries about the FBI's role in the Kennedy investigation and the FBI's relationship with the Warren Commission.

"Sullivan said that Hoover had told him, 'I am most concerned about having something issued so we can convince the public that Lee Harvey Oswald is the real assassin.' I think Sullivan smelled cover-up right there and he wondered what Hoover was hiding," this staff member said.